

Issue NE-CW0902, released March 4, 2002, by the Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. For more information contact us at: 100 Centennial Mall North, Suite 298, Lincoln, NE 68508, 402-437-5541, e-mail at [nass-ne@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-ne@nass.usda.gov), Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.

**GENERAL:** For the month of February 2002, producer activities focused on preparations for the upcoming crop season and early calving activities, according to the USDA's Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service. While February temperatures were mostly above normal, bitter cold temperatures the first few days of March resulted in difficult times for newborn calves and lambs. The early March storm brought needed moisture to this year's wheat crop. Snow depth as of Sunday, March 3, averaged three inches across the State, with amounts of 10 inches or more in some Central counties.

This release is based on reports and data from county extension educators, FSA county directors, NOAA, and the High Plains Climate Center.

**WEATHER:** Weekly temperatures averaged above normals until the last week of February. The last week averaged 10-13 degrees below normals in the east and 17-21 degrees below normals in the west.

**CROPS: Wheat** condition declined again this past month and rated 4 percent very poor, 14 poor, 36 fair, 42 good, and 4 excellent, near last year's condition at this time. The recent snow provided some cover and moisture for the crop but additional moisture is needed. **Hay** and forage supplies were mostly adequate statewide. The mild winter has allowed producers to limit the feeding of hay supplies.

**LIVESTOCK: Cattle and calves** condition rated 1 percent poor, 15 fair, 68 good, and 16 excellent. Supplemental feeding requirements were once again below normal as cattle were able to graze pastures and utilize stalk fields through most of the month. Calving across the State progressed to 24 percent calved to date.

#### **The following are comments from Nebraska's County Extension Educators and FSA County Executive Directors:**

##### *NORTHWEST*

DAWES: Calving going well. Feed supplies are good due to mild winter.

DEUEL/CHEYENNE: Cold, windy weather hampers calving activities. Dirt is blowing off of wheat fields.

SIOUX: The open winter has made livestock chores easy. This current late winter storm will cause some difficulty in feeding and calving but is not expected to be too harsh.

##### *NORTH CENTRAL*

HOLT/BOYD: Wheat is in need of moisture. The present snow cover will provide some help. Livestock are wintering quite well and hay supplies are adequate due to the mild winter.

##### *NORTHEAST*

ANTELOPE: Colder weather and some ground cover has meant most cows have been receiving supplemental feed on corn stalks. Some loss of calves born during storm have been reported.

CEDAR: A few older cows look a little rough with snow and cold this weekend. Plenty of hay and grain in area.

DAKOTA: Great winter, extremely easy on livestock. could use some moisture, but will take rain rather than snow!

DIXON: Producers continue to gear up for spring work with farm sales going very well for the most part.

KNOX: Farmers are mostly getting ready for calving season and making plans for planting this coming season.

THURSTON: Farmers are busy preparing finances and lining up inputs for the coming spring.

##### *CENTRAL*

DAWSON: We have had some snow this past week and a couple of days of bitter cold and windy weather which impacted new born calves. I have heard of some calf deaths but not excessive. Some stalks were shredded prior to the snow.

HALL: This last weekend, we had approx. 10-12 inches of light snow. The ground is not frozen underneath the snow, therefore, we should not have much run off.

##### *EAST CENTRAL*

DODGE: Producers are getting their seed and chemicals ordered for spring application. Weather has been fairly good for calving until March 1.

SARPY: Dry soil conditions and bare ground is hard on pastures, hay ground, and winter wheat. These are good conditions for livestock that are grazing crop residues.

##### *SOUTHWEST*

FRONTIER: Most cow-calf producers are enjoying a mild calving season. Some field work such as chopping stalks was getting started prior to today's snow storm. The feed supplies seem more than adequate for the mild winter that we have been having.

HAYES: Wheat crop looks bad after terrible wind, very little moisture from snow received this weekend. Most producers have started calving and the cold winds make it more difficult to keep newborns alive.

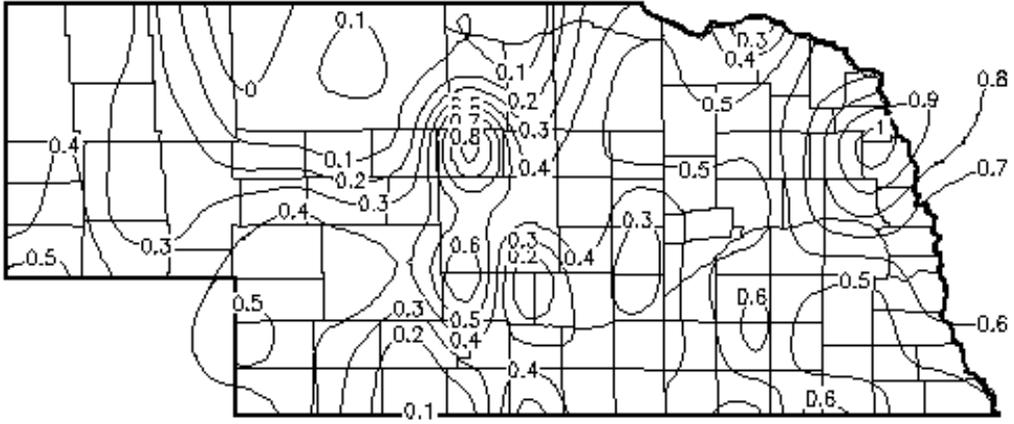
##### *SOUTHEAST*

GAGE: Lots of grain moving to town, tax season and financing season just ending, oat planting has begun.

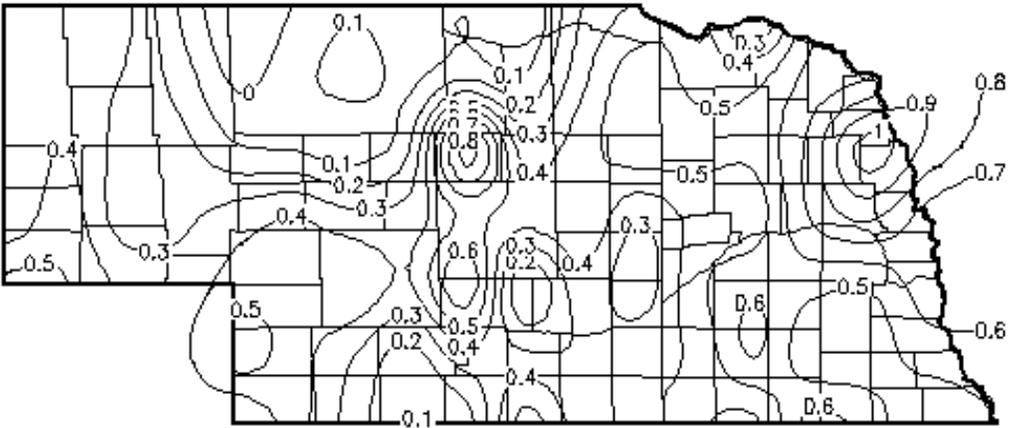
JEFFERSON: Area has had a warm, dry winter up to this date. Some oats has been planted. The winter wheat was beginning to green up due to the warm weather, however, the recent cold spell has caused the leaves to brown.

OTOE: The weather has been dry, which is good for calving but bad for next year's crops. Calving will increase this month.

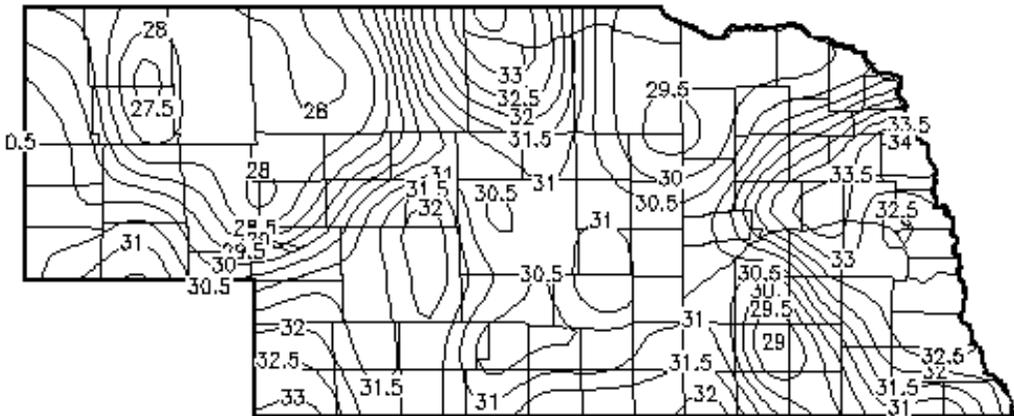
**PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR FEBRUARY 2002<sup>1</sup>**



**PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2002<sup>1</sup>**



**SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Source: High Plains Regional Climate Centers Automated Weather Data Network (AWDN).

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